

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



### NEWS RELEASE

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### **Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #55**

**COPPER RIVER DISTRICT:** The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am for a **24-hour** commercial fishing period **on Thursday, August 15 and Monday, August 19**. Shifting to coho salmon management, the Copper River District is anticipated to be on a 1-2 period a week schedule dependent upon escapement and harvest trends. Waters within the Chinook salmon inside closure area will be OPEN during this commercial fishing period. For the week ending August 10, the actual Copper River Delta survey index count was 50,875 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated range of 24,976–59,034 sockeye salmon. The preliminary harvest estimate for the fishing period that closed Tuesday, August 13 was 453 sockeye, 1,060 pink, and 20,500 coho salmon with 145 deliveries reported. The cumulative Copper River District commercial harvest to date is 1.58 million sockeye salmon and 32,400 coho salmon.

The Copper River District is open to subsistence fishing concurrent with commercial fishing periods until closed at the end of the season. Subsistence permits may be obtained during regular business hours. The Cordova ADF&G office is open to the public Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm. **Subsistence permits are not available outside of regular office hours.**

**BERING RIVER DISTRICT:** The Bering River District will open at 7:00 am for a **24-hour** commercial fishing period **on Thursday, August 15 and Monday, August 19**. Shifting to coho salmon management, the Bering River District is anticipated to be on a 1-2 period a week schedule dependent upon escapement and harvest trends. For the week ending August 10, the actual Bering River District survey index count was 12,650 sockeye salmon versus a minimum anticipated range of 4,301–9,462 sockeye salmon. No harvest was reported for the commercial fishing period that closed Tuesday, August 13.

**ESHAMY DISTRICT:** The Eshamy District will open to commercial gillnet fishing for a 14-hour period starting at 8:00 am **on Thursday, August 15 and Monday, August 19**. The MBH AGZ will open to DRIFT GILLNET permit holders only during the period occurring on Thursday, August 15 and SET GILLNET permit holders only during the period occurring on Monday, August 19. The harvest from the period that closed Monday, August 12 is confidential. Cumulative harvest through August 12 was 508,000 sockeye, 213,000 chum, 1,600 coho, and 63,900 pink salmon. Video monitoring of salmon escapement on the Eshamy River is currently operational. The estimated sockeye salmon passage into Eshamy Lake from August 4 through August 12 is a minimum of 2,200 fish. Future openings will depend on assessment of sockeye salmon run entry into Eshamy River.

**The next scheduled salmon seine fisheries announcement is anticipated to occur by 2:00 pm Thursday, August 15.**  
**The next scheduled salmon gillnet fisheries announcement is anticipated to occur by 2:00 pm Wednesday, August 21.**

Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason either establishing an additional period or extending an open period.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345**. In addition, **announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843**.

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap\\_reporting\\_form.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf) for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf) for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.